To the Christian Reader.

HAving been informed upon very good grounds, that the former Sermons of Mr *William Fenner*, have found good acceptance, both in regard of the worthinesse of the Author, and also in regard of the usefulnesse of the Sermons; I could not but give my approbation to these ensuing Sermons of the same Authour, and desire that they may find the like acceptance with all Godly wise Christians, and that they may become profitable to the Church of God.

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THE SACRIFICE OF THE FAITHFULL.

OR,

A TREATISE shewing the nature, property, and efficacy of *Zealous Prayer*; together with some Motives to Prayer, and Helps against discouragements in Prayer.

To which is added seven profitable Sermons.

1. The misery of the Creature by the sinne of man, on *Rom.* 8. 22.
2. The Christians imitation of Christ, on 1 *Ioh.* 2. 6.
3. The enmity of the wicked to the light of the Gospel, on *John* 3. 20
4. Gods impartiality, on *Esay* 42. 24.
5. The great Dignity of the Saints, on *Heb.* 11. 28.
6. The time of Gods grace is limited, on *Gen.* 6. 3.
7. A Sermon for spirituall Mortification, on *Col.* 3. 5.

By *William Fenner*, Minister of the Gospel, Fellow of *Pembrok* Hall in *Cambridge*, and Lecturer of *Rockford* in *Essex*.

LONDON,
Printed for *John Stafford*, and are to be sold at his House over against *Brides* Church in Fleet-Street, 1648.

351.81

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A DISCOURSE OF the nature of prevalent Prayer, together with some helps against discouragements in Prayer.

LAMENT. 3. VER. 57.

Thou drewest neare in the day that I called upon thee, thou saidst feare not.

THis Book of the Lamentations doth plainely shew what miseries and distresses sinne is the cause of. Now this people of the Jewes, because of their Idolatries, their contempt of Gods Ordinances, their slighting and misusing the Prophets, &c. Their Cities were taken, the Temple burned, their liberties confiscated, themselves banished out of their countrey,

and deprived of the ordinances of their God, and the signes of his presence, before they were rebellious: but now they sought God a long time; they prayed, but God would not heare, In so much that many poore soules amongst them were discouraged, and almost ready to despaire; That had not the Lord put in some incklings of hope, they had utterly fainted. Now whilst these poore soules were praying and crying, and groaning, and now ready to give over for discouragement that God will not hear them, presently the Lord flings in comfort, and beckens to their hearts not to be discouraged, but to pray on and feare not. *Thou dreweſt near in the day that I called upon thee, thou ſaidſt feare not*; the words containe in them three properties of effectuall prayer.

1 First, the unsatiableness of it till it bee heard.

2 Secondly, the sensibleness of it whether it be heard or noe.

3 Thirdly, the supplies it hath from dangers and discouragements that it is in.

1 First the unsatiableness of it; All the praiers of this people though they had beene of many yeares, yet they counted them as the prayers of one day; in the day that I called upon thee: They account all their

thou-

thousands of ſupplications and prayers as one ſuite; never had they done their prayers till God did heare them.

Secondly the ſenſibleneſſe of it, whereby it is able to know whether God doe heare it or no: Thou dreweſt neere in the day that I called upon thee. 2

Thirdly, the ſupplyes it hath againſt dangers and diſcouragements, God ſlings in comfort into their hearts, giving them incklings of hope to ſupport them againſt their diſcouragements, thou ſaidſt feare not: from the firſt of theſe, obſerve 3

That an effectuall prayer is an unſatiable prayer, A man that prayes effectually, ſets down this in himſelf as his firſt concluſion never to ceaſe, nor to give over praying till he ſpeed: This is the firſt and prime thing that a godly heart lookes at, as *David* in his prayers: He begins in this manner, *Heare my crie O God, attend unto my prayer. Pſal.* 61. 1. So, *Give eare unto my prayer O God, and hide not thy ſelfe from my ſupplications*, Pſal. 55. 1. *Hear my voyce O God in my prayer*, Pſal. 64. 1. As if he ſhould ſay, Lord, now I come to call upon thee: now that I come to thee, to begge theſe and theſe graces that my ſoule wants, I beſeech thee to heare me: for I am reſolved never to give o-

ver my suit, never to give thee rest, but for to continue my prayers and supplications, till thou give a gratious answer to my soul and heare me.

This is the first and prime thing that the soule looks after, it being the very end of prayer to be heard; it is not with prayer as with Oratory; the end of oratory is not to perswade, but to speake perswasively; for a man may use all the perswasions that may be, and use all the perswasive arguments that the wit of man can invent, and speake as cuttingly, as perswasively as may be, and yet the heart may be so intractable as not to be perswaded; it is not so with prayer.

The end of prayer is to prevaile with God. Beloved, there is difference between the end and office of prayer; the office of prayer is to pray, the end of prayer is to prevaile. There is many a man that doth the office of prayer, and yet never gets the end of prayer. A man hath never gotten the end of his prayers, till he hath gotten that he prayed for. It is not with prayer as with a Physician, that may give the best physick under heaven, and yet the Patient may die under his hands; and therefore one gives counsell that a Physician never meddle with a desperate man.

But

But if the ſoule be an effectuall ſuitor with God, it can never faile of its ſuite, becauſe it is an unſatiable Suitor, that never leaves his prayer till it terminates the end of it. I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. *Selah. Ierom* tranſlates it for ever. *Pſal.* 3. 4. never doth a child of God pray, but he prayeth ſo as that his praier and Gods eare may be joyned together; I cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard me: This alſo ſheweth how the Prophet cried and praied, namely ſo as his crying and Gods hearing were coupled together. But ſome may object, How can a man be unſatiable in his praiers til he ſpeed? muſt a man be alwaies a praying? God calls men to other duties of his worſhippe, and of his owne particular calling; after morning I muſt have done till noone, after noone I muſt have done till night: whether God heare me or no, muſt I be alwaies a praying till I ſpeed? then I ſhould doe nothing elſe but pray; how then are we to continue our praiers till God heare us, and give the grace that we pray for? to this I anſwer. *Object.*

A man muſt give over the words and times of prayer for other duties, but a man muſt not give over the ſuite of prayer. A poore begger comes to a houſekeepers gate *Anſw.*

and begs, but none heares him; now he being a poore man, hath something else to doe, and therefore he sits downe or stands and knits or patches, and then he begs or knocks, and then to his work again; though he do not alwaies continue knocking or begging, yet he alwaies continues his suite: O that my suite might be granted me, or that I might have an almes here; so when the soul is begging of any grace, though it doth not alwaies continue the words of praier, yet it alwaies continues the suite of praier. *David he would dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Psal.* 23.6. A wicked man it may be will turne into Gods house and say a prayer, &c. but the Prophet would (and so all godly men must) dwell there for ever; his soule lyeth alwaies at the throne of grace begging for grace. A wicked man he prayeth as the cock croweth; the cocke crowes and ceaseth, and crowes again and ceaseth again; and thinkes not of crowing til he crowes again: so a wicked man praies and ceaseth, prayes and ceaseth againe; his minde is never busied to thinke whether his prayers speede or no; he thinkes it is good Religion for him to pray, and therefore he takes that for granted that his praiers speede, though in very deed God never heares his praiers, nor no

more

more reſpects it, then he reſpects the lowing of Oxen, or the gruntling of hoggs: he is found in his prayers as the wilde Aſſe in her months: *Jer.* 2. The wilde Aſſe in regard of her ſwiftneſſe cannot be taken but in her months, ſhe hath a ſleepy month, and all that while ſhe is ſo ſleepy and dumpiſh that any man may take her; in her months you ſhall finde her; ſo a wicked man hath his prayer monthes, his praier fits: it may be in the morning, or in the evening, or day of his affliction and miſery you ſhall have him at his prayers, at his prayer fits then you ſhall finde him at it, but otherwiſe his mind is about other matters. But the childe of God what ever he ailes, he goes with his petition preſently to the throne of grace, and there he never removes till he hath it granted him, as here we ſee the prayers of the Church conſiſting of many yeares, yet are counted but one ſuite; try therefore and examin whether thy praiers be unſatiable praiers yea or no; and for helpe herein take theſe markes; firſt if thy prayers be unſatiable praiers, then it is a begging praier; thou praieſt as if thou hadſt never praied before, as if thou hadſt never begun to pray, and thou never thinkeſt that thou haſt done any thing till thou haſt done the deede. As a hungrie

man eates as if he had never eate before, so the unsatiable soule praies as if he had never prayed before, till he hath obtained that he hath praied for; but a wicked man he praies not thus. *Iob* speaking of carnal professors, *Iob* 27. 10. *Will he call upon God at all times?* seest thou a wicked man go to a good duty, go to praier, do you think that he wil hold out alwaies? he will never do it; for a wicked man he reasons with himself, I have called upon God thus & thus long, I hope I need not pray any more for this thing, & so he gives over.

But a godly man he will be alwaies calling upon God. Beloved, there is a beginning *to* an action, and a beginning *of* an action; thou never beginnest to lift up a weight till thou stirrest it from ground; indeede thou mayst begin towards the action by pulling at it, by reaching at it; but thou never beginnest the lifting up of the weight til thou stir it from its place: thou mayst give a pull at prayer, and rugge at a grace, but thou hast not so much as begun that duty, till thou seest God begin to hear thee, till thou seest the grace a coming; therefore the Prophet *David* when he prayed and had not that he prayed for, his prayers returned into his owne bosome, *Psal.* 35. 13. there to lie to be a continuall suite unto God. A wicked man

man praies, and he leaves his praier behind him in his pew, or in his hal, or chamber; but a godly man praies and his prayer is in his heart, his praier is not out til the grace be in.

Secondly an unsatiable prayer, it is evermore a proceeding prayer; you would think that these are two contraries and one opposite to the other, but they are not, only they are two severall things: as it is ever a beginning praier, because in his own thoughts he reckons or thinkes that he hath nothing till he speedes; so the soule that is unsatiable in praier, he proceedes, he gets neere to God, he gaines somthing, he windes up his heart higher, or somthing or other he gets: As a child that seeth the mother have an apple in her hand, and it would faine have it, it will come and pull at the mothers hand for it: now she lets go one finger and yet she holds it, and then he pulls againe, and then she lets goe another finger and yet she keepes it, and then the child pulls againe, and will never leave pulling and crying till it hath got it from his mother. So a child of God seeing all graces to be in God, he drawes neere to the throne of grace begging for it, & by his earnest & faithful praiers, he opens the hands of God to him: God dealing as parents to their children, holds them off for a while, not

that he is unwilling to give, but to make them more earnest with God: to draw them the neerer to himselfe; a wicked man praies and his praiers tumble downe upon him againe; and his heart is as dead as ever it was before, as sensuall as ever, as carnall and earthly as ever, as hard, as impenitent and secure as ever.

§ A godly man when he praies, though he have not gotten the thing totall that he desired, yet he is neerer God then he was before; his heart growes every day better then other by his praiers; he obtaines still something, as the Prophet *Hoseah* speakes of knowledge *Hos. 6. 3. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord*: so I may say of praier, & of al other good duties, then we pray if we proceed on wards in praier.

A man may know and know, and yet never know the Lord, till he goe on in knowledge; so a man may pray and pray, yet if he goe not on-wards in his praiers, his praiers are nothing. A godly man praies as a builder builds; now a builder he first layeth a foundation, and because he cannot finish in one day, he comes the second day, and findes the frame standing that he made the first day, and then he adds a second dayes worke, and then he comes a third day and findes

findes his two former dayes worke ſtanding; then he proceeds to a third dayes worke, and makes walls to it, and ſo he goes on till his building be finiſhed. So prayer it is the building of the ſoule till it reach up to heaven; therefore a godly heart praies and reacheth higher & higher in praier, till at laſt his prayers reach up to God.

It is a ſigne of a wicked man to pray and to let his prayers fall downe againe upon him. And here I appeale to the conſciences of wicked men, if it be not ſo with them; they pray and pray, but their hearts are as dead and deceitfull, as proud and vaine, as ignorant, blockiſh and rebellious, as if they had never praied.

Thirdly, it is more and more a fervent praier; if a little praier will not ſerve the turne, if he ſpeeds not to day, then he will pray more earneſtly to morrow; and if that will not ſerve the turne, he will adde more. 3

As a man in winding up of a bucket, if two or three windings will not fetch it up, he will winde it up higher and higher, till it comes up; for if he ſhould onely winde up once or twiſe and no more, but hold it juſt at the ſame pin, the bucket would never come up; So if a man praies and praies, and windes not up his heart higher, but holds

holds it juſt at the ſame pegge it was, praies in the ſame faſhion he did, grace will never come up. Marke then how thou prayeſt, examine thy heart; doſt thou pray to day as yeſterday, with no more zeal, nor feeling affection, nor ſencible deſire? thou praieſt not unſatiably.

No, thou reſtraineſt thy praying from growing, an excellent diſcription of an hypocrite, *Iob* 14. 4. though falſly applied to *Iob. Thou reſtraineſt prayer before God*; in ſome tranſlations it is *Thou keepeſt thy prayers from growing*, thou reſtraineſt thy praiers as a dwarffe is reſtrained from growing, ſo thou reſtraineſt thy praiers from being more and more earneſt and effectuall and fervent, unſatiable praier is growing in zeale and affection.

4 Fourthly it is a more and more frequent praier, ſo that if twice a day will not ſerve the turne, *he will pray three times a day. Pſal.* 55. 17. and if that will not prevaile, *he will pray ſeven times a day. Pſal.* 119. 164. and when that is not enough, he will be even ever a praying, hardly broken off day or night. *Pſal.* 88. 1. he cares not how often he praies; it may be that thou haſt been a ſuitor for ſtrength and grace againſt corruptions, and haſt put up many praiers to the ſame

same purpose · If now thou stickest at any praiers, thy praiers are not unsatiable; an unsatiable soul never resteth, though it have made ten thousand praiers, till it have gotten the grace; it is so with other things, and therefore we neede not wonder at it; when a man doth his worke one day, he will do it another, and so on as long as he lives till his worke be done; so must we doe for heaven and for grace.

Fifthly it is ever more and more a backt praier: if ordinary praiers will not serve the turne: a godly heart will cut off time from his recreations and pleasures, though in themselves lawfull. Beloved, it may be with thy soule in its wraftlings and strivings for grace and power against corruptions, that ordinary praiers will not satisfie it, but it will be necessary to give over even lawfull delights, and give that time to praier; so a man will doe for the world, if he have a businesse of importance, that will bring him in gaine, he will be content to part with his delights, and recreations, and pleasures, to follow after it; so a man must doe for his soule, and if that be not enough, then lay aside the duties of thy calling, to take time from that. If a man have two houses on fire both together, the one his mansion dwelling

ling house, the other some backe roome or stable, if he can, he will save both; but if he see that by spending his time on quenching the fire on the stable, that his great mansion house will burne downe, he will then neglect the other and let it burne if it will, and imploy himselfe about his house; So when the soule is in misery under the want of grace, that it cannot live under, but must perish eternally if it have it not, then the soule being better then the body, rather then that the soule miscarry, we will neglect the body sometime. And if this will not serve, abstaine from meate and drinke, fast it out; thus the people of God are faine to doe many times; their lust and corruptions being even as the devill himselfe, which cannot be cast out but by praier and fasting; there is an excellent place: *Joel* 2. 12. *Therefore now turne unto the Lord with fasting, weeping and mourning, rent your hearts, &c.* Therefore now, now your sinnes are so divelish, now your sinnes are so deepely rooted in your soules, now your corruptions are come to be such plague soares within you, doe you not thinke that your ordinary repentance, and ordinary praiers and humiliations will serve the turne, but now backe them with fasting and mourning. Here now thou

thou mayst examine thy soule whether it have praied effectually, unfatiably yea or no: hath it ever a begging praier, that thou praiest as if thou hadst never praied before? is it evermore a proceeding praier, that thou doest every day draw neerer to God then other? is it more and more a backt praier, a fervent and frequent praier? hast thou taken from thy recreations, from thy calling to give to it, yea from thy belly and backe, and used all meanes for a prevailing with God? then are thy praiers effectuall and unfatiable.

This then condemnes the praiers of most men in the world, they pray and pray for grace, and their praiers come to an end, and cease before they have it; the angrie fretchard praies for patience and meeknesse and yet sets downe without it; the covetous worldling praies to be weaned from the world, and his praiers are done before he is so; so the lukewarmeling deadhearted and vaine-thoughted professor praies for better thoughts, for more zeale, and yet comes to his *be it so* before he have it: and so every wicked man praies, and he is come to his *Amen* before the grace is given; let all such men know that such praiers first they are endlesse, secondly they are fruitlesse. *Use.*

First

First they are endlesse: The Philosopher said that that for which a thing is, that is the end of the thing: now praier is for the speeding with God: and therefore he whose praiers speed not with God, his praiers are endlesse: thou hast praied against thy pride, but art as proude still: thou hast praied against thy choler and art as teachy still: thou hast praied against earthlines and worldlines, and art earthly and worldly still: thou hast praied against security and deadnes of heart, and lukewarmenesse in Gods service, and art lukewarm, dead hearted and secure still: to what end are all thy praiers, when thou enjoyest not the end of thy praiers? to what end is plowing of thy ground if it be not fallow? when thy plowing is done, to what end is the worke of thy servant, if thy businesse be not done, and dispatched when all is done? As good never pray as pray to no end, as good that thou never hadst begun to pray, as to cease, and to give over thy praiers before thou hast obtained the grace thou prayest for: *The prayers of the wicked are an abomination unto the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight: Prov.* 15. 8. that is, the praiers of a wicked man that continues in his wickednesse, when his praiers are done, his

praiers are an abomination to the Lord: but the praiers of the upright though he were before he praied never so wicked, yet if it be the praier of an upright and godly man, when his praiers are done, that his praiers rid him of his sin, and make him an upright man, his praiers are Gods delight.

Beloved, many pray against distrust in Gods providence, Infidelity in Gods promises, Impatiency under Gods corrections, &c. and yet have never the more trust and affiance in God, never the more patience under the hand of God, all these praiers are *endlesse*.

Secondly, thy praiers are *fruitlesse*: to what purpose is a beggers begging of an almes? if he be gone before the almes be bestowed, his begging is fruitlesse; so all thy praiers are lost, if thou art gone from the Throne of grace, before grace is given thee: for if such a praier be endlesse, then is it also fruitlesse: it will never do thee any good. what is a fruitlesse tree good for, but to be cut down? what is a fruitlesse Vine good for, but to be burned? So all thy praiers are lost, all thy beginnings of grace are lost. we know saith the man that was borne blind, *John 9.* that God heareth not sinners, we know it: Why may some

say, how do you know that God heares not sinners? why, we know it by experience, by examples.

A drunkard prayeth to God to cure him of his drunkennes, & yet he doth not leave his ill company; all the world may see that God hears not the drunkards praier because he cures him not, but lets him go on in his sin; and so for all other sins: seest thou a man goe on in his sinnes? thou mayest see that God heareth not his praiers. if a man should be sicke on his death bed, and send for the Physicians and Apothecaries in the Country, and send for his Father, Mother, and for all his friends to come to him to minister to him: yet I know he is not cured by them so long as I see his deadly disease remaines upon him; so if I see a mans pride, hypocrisie, security, deadnesse of heart, his lust, anger, &c. lie upon him: notwithstanding all his praiers, I know God heares not his praiers; he prayes to be cleansed from his sinnes, and to be purged from his lust, and to be redeemed from his vaine conversation: if now God let his sinnes continue in him, and lets him goe on in them, we see plainely God heares not him. O what a pittifull and miserable case are such men in, that pray and pray, and yet all their praiers

praiers are endleſſe and fruitleſſe! is not that man in a pirtifull caſe, that all phyſick, all coſt and charges is loſt upon him; when his eating and drinking, his ſleeping, and winding and turning from this ſide to that ſide do him no good; do we not ſay of him that he is a dead man? ſo if a mans praiers and ſupplications to God be endleſſe and fruitleſſe: that man muſt needs be a dead and a damned man ſo long as he goeth on in that caſe.

Now we come to the ſecond part of the Text, *the ſenſibleneſſe of the godly ſoule.* whether it ſpeed or no, the ſoule that praies aright, *that* praies unſatiably: it is able to ſay the Lord doth heare me, the Lord doth grant me the thing that I praied to him for; Thus ſaith *Jonah, I cried unto the Lord and he heard me; out of the belly of Hell cryed I, and thou heardſt my voice,* Jonah 2. 2. How could *Jonah* ſay God heard his voice, if he had not known it? therefore he knew it. But againſt this ſome may object,

How can this be? how can the ſoule know that God heares it? we have no Angels, nor voices from Heaven *now* to tell men, as the Angel told *Cornelius* that his praiers were accepted, and come up before God; or to ſay as Chriſt to the woman in *Obje.*

the Gospell, *Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee*; I know God heares me with his All-hearing eare, and therefore I have a good beliefe in God: but how shall I know that God heares my praiers in mercy, so as to grant that I pray for?

Answ. There be *sixe* wayes to know whether the soule shall speed in prayer, yea or no.

1 The first is, *the having of a Spirit of further and further praying.* When God gives the soule a further and further ability to pray, when God opens a way for the soule to the Throne of grace, and gives him a free accesse to the gate of mercy, and a spirit to hold out in prayer: It is a signe that God meanes to hear it. When a Petitioner hath accesse to the King, and presents his Petition, If the King imbolden him in his speech, and let him speak all that he would speak, it is a signe that the King meanes to grant that man his petition, because otherwise the King would never have endured to have heard him so long, but would have commanded him to be gone. So it is with the soule at the Throne of grace; if it come with a petition and prayer to God; if God dispatch the soule out of his presence, so that the soul hath no heart to pray, nor to continue its suite; but praies deadly and dully,

dully, and is glad when he hath ſaid his prayers, and hath done: it is a fearefull ſigne that God never means to heare that mans prayers: but if thou praieſt and praieſt, and haſt not done in thy praiers, but God by caſting in a ſpirit of prayer and zeale, and fervency in prayer, imboldens thy heart in its petitions, it is a ſigne that God will heare thee, and grant thee thy prayers.

Bleſſed be God ſaith the Prophet, *that hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me*; How could the Prophet ſay that the Lord did not turne away his mercy from him? How! becauſe he turned not away his prayer from him. Many Expoſitors expound it *of* not turning away his prayer from his heart; as if he ſhould ſay, Lord, thou continueſt my heart to pray, thou haſt not taken away my prayer from my heart; therefore I know that thou continueſt thy mercy unto me.

Secondly, *the preparedneſſe of the heart to pray*, is a ſigne that God means to heare. 2
When the Merchant ſtretcheth his bagge wider and wider, it is a ſigne that he means to put ſomething in it: ſo when God *opens the heart* of a poore ſoule, it is a ſigne that he means to *fill it*; when God prepares the

soule with more hunger and thirst after grace, with more longings and breathings: it is a signe that God hath already *prepared his eare* to heare that prayer; it is a signe *that* heart shall speed with God in prayer: Psal. 10. 17. *Lord thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine eare to heare.* First, God prepares the heart to pray, and then he bows his eare to heare.

Examine thy soule then; art thou more and more prepared to pray? hath God spoken with a powerfull voice to thy soule to open it selfe wide? it is a signe that God meanes to fill thy soul with his graces. But if thou canst rush into Gods presence, and leave thy preparednesse behind thee; leavest thy soule and thy thoughts, and thy affections behinde thee; and comest with a straightned heart in thy deadnesse and lukewarmenesse; *this* is a fearefull signe that God will not heare thee.

3 Thirdly, *Gods gracious looke, is a signe that he will heare thee*: for sometimes (beloved) God answers his people by a cast of his countenance, with a gratious smile of his face. Psal. 22. 24. he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him, but when

when he cryed unto him he heard. Hereby was the Prophet able to know that God did heare his prayer, becauſe he did not hide his face from him; when his poore ſoule ſaw God ſmile on him, and ſet a favourable eye upon him, this made him ſay that God heard his cry.

This is a riddle to the world.

If you ſhould aske the men of the world what the meaning of *Gods gracious countenance* is, or what they ſee of it? alas, they can ſay nothing of it; they know not what it meanes; onely the godly man underſtandeth, Pſal. 34. 15. *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his eares are open unto their cry*; Theſe two goe together, *their prayers* enter into *Gods eares*, and they know it; why? becauſe they ſee it in his countenance upon them, as a Petitioner may read his ſpeeding with the King by his countenance towards him; ſo a poore ſoul may ſee how prayers prevaile by Gods countenance and look upon him.

If thou then art a ſtranger to Gods countenance, if God never admitted thee into his preſence to ſee his face and countenance; it is a ſigne that God little regards thy prayers, and hath no minde to heare thee. A wicked man is like a varlet that

ſtands without dores and begges an almes, but is not ſuffered to goe into the Gentlemans preſence, and therefore knowes not how he ſpeeds, whether the Gentleman will give him an almes, or whether he be providing a cudgell to beat him away: ſo a wicked man prayes and puts up his petitions to God, but he is not able to come before God: he cannot ſee whether God looke as if he meant to heare his prayers, yea or no; he knows not but that God may be providing a curſe and plague for him in ſtead of a bleſſing. But a child of God comes within the liſt of Gods countenance; he can tell when God ſmiles on him: and when he takes another looke: he is able to come into Gods preſence, Job 13. 16. *He alſo* (ſaith Job) *ſhall be my ſalvation: for an hypocrite ſhall not come before him.* A ſtrange verſe. *Job* ſaith, *God is his ſalvation*: and he gives this reaſon why he was able to ſay ſo: *for an hypocrite ſhall not come before him.* One would think that this were no reaſon: but yet it is an undeniable reaſon, as if *Job* had ſaid, I come into his preſence, and he lookes like a Saviour, a Redeemer upon me; but an hypocrite ſhall not come before him: he ſtands like a rogue and begs without the gate.

In-

Indeed a wicked man comes into Gods presence, in regard of Gods *Omnipresence*: but this is not enough: thy Oxe, and thine Asse stands in Gods presence: yea *so*, the very Devils themselves are in Gods presence. But if thou come not into Gods presence of grace, if God doe not admit thy soule into the list of his Throne: it is a signe that God heares thee not. Men should therefore examine their consciences, what face or presence of God they come into or see: when they pray in their prayers, whether they come before God, yea or no.

Beloved, no wicked man under heaven can come before God: this is made the marke of a godly man onely, Psal. 140. 13. *The upright shall dwell in thy presence*, (marke here) *dwelling in Gods presence* is onely determined to the righteous: the upright shall dwell in thy presence: And here I appeale againe to the hearts and consciences of wicked men, what presence of God doe they finde in their prayers? they see their Pews, and the walls or hangings, &c. before them: they see the heavens and the clouds above them: they are like rogues that know nothing within dores. Doe they see Gods presence and countenance? no: it is the upright man onely that dwels in Gods pre-

fence: He sees how God lookes on him, how his face smiles on him: and therefore, it is not a wicked mans coming to Church, and falling on his knees, and uttering the words of prayer that is a coming into Gods presence: then, this would be a falle saying of the Prophet. For a wicked man may go to Church and fall upon his knees, &c. but never *come before God.*

This presence, is, *to see the face of God.*

4 Fourthly *the conscience of a man doth answere him whether God heare him yea or no.* As it was with the high Preist, whensoever the high Preist came into Gods presence to inquire of him, though God did not appeare visibly unto him, yet he might reade Gods answer in his *Urim and Thummim*; he might there know Gods minde: so *a mans conscience* is his Urim and Thummim. When he comes before God, his own conscience gives him an inckling whether he speede or no: 1 *Ioh.* 3.20,21. *If our hearts condemne us, God is greater then our hearts & knoweth al things. Belived, if our hearts condemne us not, then have we confidence towards God.* If a mans conscience tell a man that his praiers are rotten, that his humiliation is rotten, that his heart is not upright, that yet he is not purged from his sinnes, that his seeking of God

God is fained and hypocritical; it is the very voice of God in his ſoule: and *if our conſciences condemne us*, God (ſaith the Apoſtle) *is greater then our conſciences.*

There no is condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus. *Rom.* 8. 1. as if he ſhould ſay, thoſe that are in Chriſt, God doth not condemne them; they have not that condemnation: nay their owne conſcience doth not condemn them: ſo that, that man whom any condemnation either from God, or from his owne conſcience, condemnes, that man is not in Chriſt; being not in Chriſt, he can never be heard.

Indeede, a mans conſcience may be miſinformed by Satan under a temptation; as you may ſee in the verſe before my text: *Thou haſt heard my voyce: ſtop not thine eare from my cry.* Here the Church being examined, their conſciences told them they were heard in their praiers: but being under a temptation, their conſciences were afraide that God heard not. So many a poore ſoule examine it, and it cannot deny but that theſe and theſe tokens of grace and fruites of Gods Spirit are in it; yet their conſciences are afraide that the Lord will not give them theſe and theſe other graces that they want: that the Lord will not heare them for ſuch

such and such blessings.

I meane not neither a truce of conscience: for there may be a truce of conscience in wicked men. A truce may be betweene mortall enemies: but no peace but amongst freinds. Wicked mens consciences are like the Lion, 1. *Kings* 13. who when he had killed the Prophet, stood by the Corps, and by the Asse, and did not eate the body, nor teare the Asse; so a wicked mans conscience, it is as the divells band-dogge or roaring Lion: till it hath slaine the sinner, it stands stone-still, and seemes neither to meddle or make with him, but lies as seared or dead in him. I meane not this conscience. But when God hath sprinkled the conscience with the bloud of Christ, and made the conscience pure: this is a signe that God heares his praier.

I meane not the stammering of conscience, when it is dazelled, or overwhelmed: but when it speaks down right as it meanes. A godly mans conscience sometimes may judge otherwise then the thing is. But, examine what thy conscience tells thee in sober sadnesse, deliberately; convincingly,: and *then*, know that the Lord tels thee. If thy conscience saies peremptorily that thy heart and waies are rotten, and unsound;

then

then know that the Lord tells thee so, and that the Lord sayeth so to thy soule.

Fifthly *the getting of that grace that a man prayes for*, is a signe that God heares his praiers. But this is not a true signe alwaies but with distinction. 5

When the grace given, and the good will of God the giver, cannot be severed: then it is a true signe. But when the gift and the good will of the giver may be severed, then it is not a true signe.

Thou maiest pray unto God, and God may give thee many temporall blessings, and *many common* graces of his Spirit; God may give thee good parts, a good memory: he may give thee a good measure of knowledge and understanding, even in divers things; he may give thee some kinde of humility, chastity, civility; thou maiest be of a loving and flexible dispositon: so he may give thee a good estate in the world, houses, lands, wife and children &c. God may give thee *all these*, and yet hate thee, and never heare one praier thou makest; thou maist pray for a thousand blessings, and have them: and yet never be heard, so long as the good will of the giver is severed from them; all outward blessings and common graces may be severed from Gods good

good pleasure to a man.

Therefore in temporall blessings, or in common graces, if thou wouldst know whether God heare thee or no: know whether God hath given thee a *sanctified use* of them or no. If God hath given thee many common graces, or temporall blessings, and *a heart* to use them to his Glory; then every blessing thou hast (there is not a droppe of drinke, nor a bit of bread that thou hast, but) it is a signe of Gods everlasting love to thee. Why? because this, and the good will of the giver can never be severed. But on the contrary, if a man have not a sanctified use of that he hath, *then* it is the greatest severity of God, and the most eminent plague and curse of God upon the soule *to give it*; for a mans parts may be his bane, his civility may be his curse, and meanes of the finall hardnesse and impenitencie of his heart.

6 Sixthly *faith*; if a man have faith given him *to beleive*, it is a signe that God heares him; *be it to thee* (saith Christ to the man in the Gospell) *according to thy faith*; so goe thou to God, and be it to thee as thou beleevest. Dost thou pray for grace? according as thou beleevest, so shalt thou receive.

Object. I have no signe that God will heare me;

I have

I have ſo many corruptions of my heart againſt me, and ſo many threatnings of Gods frownes againſt me; I have no ſigne that God will heare me.

Wouldſt thou have a ſigne? *An evill and an adulterous generation ſeeketh a ſigne*: this is *a tempting faith*, to ſeeke for ſignes to believe. *Thomas*, ſaid Chriſt, Joh. 20. 29. *becauſe thou haſt ſeen me, thou haſt believed: bleſſed are they that have not ſeene and yet believe.* That man that believes becauſe he feels griefe in his heart, teares in his eyes, groans in his ſpirit, becauſe he prayes long and earneſtly, and ſweats in his praier, or mourns in his humiliation, I ſuſpect his humiliation, his teares, his griefe, his praiers, and all that he hath. Why? theſe are good ſignes of faith: but *rotten grounds* of faith: the Word and promiſe of God muſt be thy ground. But againſt this the ſoul may object, *Anſw.*

That every *Promiſe* runnes with a *Condition*: and therefore if I have not the condition, how can I beleeve the promiſe God hath promiſed? *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſſe, for they ſhall be ſatisfied.* There is a *Promiſe* of filling, but it is with a condition of hungering. *Bleſſed are the meek, for they ſhall inherit the earth. Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they* *Object.*

ſhall

shall see God, &c. if I have not the Condition annexed to the Promise, how dare or how can I believe the Promise?

Answ. The *Condition* is not the way to get the *Promise*; the *Promise* is the ground of faith, and the way to get the condition; because the promise is the *Motive* cause that moves the soule to get the condition. Now, the *Mover* must be before the *Moved*; then if *beliefe* of the *Promise* move thy soule to get the condition of the promise, then beliefe of the promise must be before that the soule can keepe the condition of the promise.

Saul made a promise to *David*, 1 Sam. 18. that he should be his sonne in law in one of his two daughters, upon condition that he should give him an hundred fore-skins of the Philistims. Now, *David* did first believe the promise; and thereby he was allured to fight valiantly, to keepe the condition, to get a hundred fore-skins of the Philistims. So Psal. 116. *I believed and therefore did I speake.* He beleeved Gods promise, and then he spake with condition. So, *we believe* saith the Apostle, *and therefore doe we speake.* First, the soule beleeves; and then every action of a Christian wherin it moves to the keeping of the condition,

springs

ſprings from this root; nay beloved, a man cannot keep any condition in the Bible without faith; *he muſt believe.*

Secondly, *faith is the inabling cauſe to keep the condition.* Doſt thou thinke to get weeping, mourning, and humiliation for thy ſinnes, and then thereby to get the promiſe to thy ſelfe? then thou goeſt in thy owne ſtrength; and then, in Gods account, thou doſt juſt nothing, John 15. 5. *Without me ye can doe nothing*, ſaith Chriſt; therefore firſt *lay hold* on me, *beleeve* in me, *abide* in me. 2

What! doe you firſt think to pray, to mourne, to lament and bewaile your ſinnes, to do this and that in turning your ſelves, and ſanctifying of your ſelves? Indeed you may fumble about theſe things: but you can never do any of them in deed and to the purpoſe: *without me ye can doe nothing. I had fainted* ſaith the Prophet, *unleſſe I had beleeved to ſee the goodneſſe of the Lord in the land of the living*, Pſal. 27. 13. where we may ſee three things.

Firſt, *the Promiſe* that he ſhould ſee the goodneſſe of the Lord: otherwiſe he could not have beleeved. 1

Secondly, *the Condition*: if he doe not faint. 2

3 Thirdly, *the method the Prophet went by.*

1 First, he beleeved to see the goodnesse of the Lord. As if he had said, if he had not first laid hold on the Promise, if *I* had not beleeved to have seen the goodnesse of the Lord in the Land of the living, I had fainted.

Beloved, it is true that the keeping of the Condition, is before the *fruition of the Promise*: but not before *beleeving the Promise*: because the *doing of the Condition* is effected by *beleeving the Promise.*

This is the cause that many fumble about grace, but never get it: they are ever repenting, but never repent: ever learning, but never learne the knowledge of the truth everlasting: ever striving, but never get power over their corruptions, &c. because they fumble about it *in their own strength*, and take it not in the right method.

Let the soule come with faith in Christ, and believe it shall speed and have grace, and power from Christ his grace, and from Christs power: and *then* it shall speed; Christ hath promised (*John* 16.) that whatsoever we aske the Father in his name, he will give it us. Christ (beloved) is an excellent *Surety*. Indeed, our credit is crackt in Heaven: we may thinke to goe and fetch

this

this and that grace in our owne names, and misse of it: as the *servant* may goe to the *Merchant* for wares in his owne name, but the Merchant will not deliver them to him in his own name, unlesse he come in his *Masters* name and bring a ticket from him: and *then* when the servant sheweth his Masters ticket, the Merchant will deliver him what wares he asketh for in his Masters name. So when a soule goeth to the *Throne of grace* with a ticket from *Christ*; if he can say Lord, it is for the honour of Christ: I come for grace and holinesse, and strength against my corruptions: Lord, here is a ticket from Christ: most *certainly*, he shall speed.

But, men must take heed that they foyst not the name of Christ: that they foyst not a ticket to say that Christ sent them, when it is their own *selfe-love*, and their owne lust that sends them; it is not enough to pray and at the end to say *through Christ our Lord, Amen.* No: for this may be a meere foysting of the Name of Christ. But, canst thou pray and shew that Christ sent thee, and say as the servant, I come from my Master, and he sent me: Lord, it is for Christ that I come: it is not to satisfie my owne lust, nor to ease and deliver me from

the galls of my conscience, nor to free me from hell; but for Christ; Lord, I begge grace and holinesse, that I may have power to glorifie Christ. It is for the honour of my Lord Christ that I come. When the soul comes thus in Christs name, beleeving it shall speed, then his prayer shall prevaile. *Whatsoever* (saith Christ) *ye shall aske the Father in my Name, he will give it you.*

We come now to the third and last part of our Text: to wit, the supplies they had against danger and discouragements. The Lord upheld their hearts from being dismayed in prayer; *thou saidst feare not.*

There be two things that do much hurt in prayer.

1 First, *groundlesse incouragements.*
2 Secondly, *needlesse discouragements.*
1 First, I say, *groundlesse incouragements*; and these the wicked are most subject to especially, who because they *pray*, *heare the Word*, and performe many duties of religion; therefore they incourage themselves in the goodnesse of their estates, judgeing themselves happy, though notwithstanding they go on and continue in the hardnesse of their hearts and rebellions against God.

We

We have abundance of *ſayings* amongſt us, that if they were examined would prove falſe and unſound; As, *that* the vipers die when they bring forth their young; for (ſay they) the young eate out the old ones bowels; *that* beares ſhape all their *young* by licking of them; that the Swanne ſingeth ſweeteſt at her death; that the Adamant ſtone is ſoftned by Goats blood, &c. Theſe things are not ſo, as may be ſhewn out of ancient Writers.

So, beloved, there are abundance of *ſayings*, that goe up and down amongſt men concerning *Divinity*, which if they were examined, will prove to be rotten ſayings; as, he that made them, will ſave them. It is not ſo, ſaith the Prophet, Eſai. 27. 11. *He that made them, will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will not pitty them.* It is commonly beleeved, if men come to Church, heare the *Word*, and call upon God, that then preſently they are good Chriſtians. Beloved, it is not ſo, Matth. 7. 21. *Not every one that ſaith Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdome of Heaven.*

Men are ready when they can but call *Lord have mercy on me*; *O ſweet Saviour, pitty me, moſt mercifull Lord Jeſus, have compaſſion on me*: if they can *pray in their*

families, and pray at Church, &c. to think, now, all is well with them, and Christ cannot but save them, and give them the Kingdome of Heaven: but our Saviour puts a *not* upon it, and saith, *not every one* that saith Lord, Lord: it is not a *Lord*, a Lording of Christ with the tongne onely: it is not a taking up of an outward profession of Christ only, that is sufficient for a man that shall inherit the Kingdome of Heaven: no saith Christ: but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. But, of this by the *by*.

2 Secondly, there are *needlesse discouragements* which doe much hurt in prayer. Needlesse discouragements doe much hurt to many a poore soule, that hath forcible *wouldings*, and wracked desires after grace and holinesse, and yet is held by discouragements: yea, many a Christian heart lieth a long time under it wrastling and striving under its wants, and yet, kept out from grace, and from growing in grace, because of discouragements: yea the best and strongest of Gods Saints, have been kept off, and have hung much on discouragements.

Feare not, saith God to *Abraham*, Genes. 15. 1. So, feare not *Joshua*, saith God to *Joshua*,

Joshua, Josh. 1. 9. Intimating that both *Abraham* and *Joshua* were afraid of discouragements: they were afraid that many evils would befall them, that they should meet with many rubs and difficulties that would be too hard for them: therefore the Lord calls to them, *feare not*, be not dismayed nor discouraged. Thou saidst feare not. Hence observe,

That God would not have any Christian soule to be discouraged in praier. *Thou saidst, feare not.* *Doct.*

For our clearer proceeding herein, first, let me shew you what *discouragement* is: and secondly, how it comes to be dangerous and hurtfull in praier.

What is discouragement? *Quest.*

It is a *base dismayment* of spirit below or beneath the strength that is in a man, vnder the apprehension of some evill, as if it were too hard for him to grapple with it. *Answ.*

There be foure things in this diffinition.

Firſt, I say it is a *base dismayment* of spirit; and so I call it to distinguish it: for there is an humble dismayment which a Christian is commanded. A man is bound to be dismayed for his sinnes. *Isay.* 32. 11. *Tremble ye careleſſe women that are at eaſe, be troubled ye careleſſe ones*: theſe careleſſe ones 1

went on in their sinnes, and feared not. God calls to them and bids them to be dismayed. But the dismayment and the discouragement I speake of, it is a base dismayment of spirit; which is either when *he* is dismayed *that ought not*: or he is dismayed *at that whereat he ought not to feare*: where no cause of feare is.

As *Vitello* his man thought his Master had got skill in Optickes: he riding along upon the high way, spying a mans shape, thought it was some Spirit: and thereupon he sickened and died. So many a poor soul looking in the perfect Law of God, and seeing his owne uglinesse and filthynesse, he is discouraged, and thinkes himselfe undone; his heart waxeth cold within him, and he begins to feare that he is but a dead and damned man.

2 Secondly, *it is downe beneath the strength that is in a man*: that man is properly said to be discouraged: not that he hath no strength at all in him, nor no courage at all (for such a one is an *infeebled* man, not a man discouraged) but a discouraged man is a man put besides the courage that is in him; when a man hath strength enough to grapple with the evill before him, but through dismayment of spirit he cannot put it forth.

Have

Have not I commanded thee? faith God to *Joshua*; *Be strong and of a good courage*, be not afraid, neither be thou dismaied, *Josh.* 9. God had given *Joshua* strength enough, whereby he was inabled to observe and do according to all that Law which *Moses* the servant of the Lord commanded him; God had now doubled his Spirit upon him: yet he commands him, *be not afraid, neither dismayed*: as if he had said, *Joshua*, if thou beest dismayed and discouraged, though thou hast strength and power to go through the businesse that I have called thee unto, yet thou wilt not be able to use it, nor to put it forth if thou beest discouraged.

Thirdly, *it is at the apprehension of some evill.* 3 I say not at the sight of some evill: for a man may be dismayed at the apparition of good, as *Mary* when she saw nothing but a good Angell, *Luke* 1.29. she saw nothing but a glorious Angel: nevertheless she was afraid, and discouraged. Why? because she had a secret apprehension of some evill, either of some evill proceeded in the salutation, or some unworthinesse in her selfe to receive such a gracious salutation: it cannot be the apprehension of any good that discourageth a man, but the apprehension of some evill.

Fourthly, *not of every evill* neither; for if the evill be but small, courage will stand it out; but *it is of such an evill as he feares he is not able to grapple withall.* If the evill before him, be inferiour to him, he scornes it as the barking of a toothlesse Dog. If it be but an evill equall to his strength, then he makes a tush at it, because he knowes or thinkes himselfe able to encounter with it.

But if it be an evill above his strength, then his spirit melts and droops before him. See this in *Saul*, 1 Sam. 17. 11. and his people. When they saw the Champion of the Philistims comming against them, when they saw him so hugely and mervelously armed, and heard him speake such bigge words, they thought they were not able to stand and to encounter with him; and therfore saith the Text, when *Saul* and all *Israel* heard these words of the Philistim, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

Thus you see what discouragement is; such discouragements the Lord would not have our hearts to be in when we pray unto him.

1 For first, *God cannot give eare to that man that is out of heart in his prayers.* Thou canst never pray if thou beest dismaied in prayer. When the soul begins to feare and reason,

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O, I am ſo unworthy that God will not looke at me; I am ſo ſinfull, ſo blockiſh, ſo dead, and dull to all good, that God will never regard me; thou canſt never pray, Rom. 10.14. *How ſhall they call on him in whom they have not beleeved?* If thou doſt not believe that God will heare thee, if thou doſt not beleeve that thou ſhalt prevaile, that God will deliver thee out of theſe corruptions and that luſt that thou praieſt againſt; that God will give thee this grace or that grace: if thou doſt not beleeve that God will owne thee: if thou haſt theſe doubtfull diſcouragements, * *O, he will not grant me, I ſhall never get this or that*: how canſt thou call on him? thou mayeſt call ſo and ſo: but never canſt thou call to any purpoſe, if thou doſt not beleeve in him.

A begger though he be never ſo well able to begge, yet if when he comes to the Houſe-keepers dore, he be perſwaded that he ſhall not ſpeed, that let him beg as long as he will, he ſhall get nothing: this blunts his begging, and makes him give over his ſuite without any great importunity: So, it is impoſſible that ever a ſoule ſhould hold out and pray that is diſcouraged in prayer.

Secondly, *thou canſt not pray unleſſe thou*

uſe

uſe all thy ſtrength in prayer; If thou be diſcouraged, thou canſt not uſe thy ſtrength.

A diſcouraged man, his ſtrength melts into feare; and whatſoever ſtrength he hath, he cannot put it forth. How came *Jacob* to prevaile and to have power with God? Why, he uſed all his ſtrength with God, and ſo prevailed, *Hoſea* 12. 3. Thou canſt never prevaile with God by thy prayers, unleſſe thou putteſt forth all thy ſtrength in praier.

If *Jacob* had reaſoned *I am but duſt and aſhes, how can I ſtrive with God? I am ſinfull and evill, how can I contend with my Maker?* and ſo have beene diſcouraged in his wraſtling, he could not have uſed all his ſtrength with God, and ſo had never prevailed with God. No, *Jacob* he gathers all the arguments that he could make; he gathers together all the promiſes he could finde in Gods Book, or that he could heare off; he diſplaies all the wants that he could ſhew; he petitions all the graces that he could name; he uſed all his ſtrength, and by his ſtrength he had power with God.

If thy confeſſion of thy ſins be ſtrengthleſſe; if thy petitions, and thankeſgiving for grace, be ſtrengthleſſe; if thou uſe not all

all thy ſtrength in prayer, thou canſt never prevaile, nor have any power with God. For how can that man prevaile and have power with God that hath no power with himſelfe?

3 Thirdly, *thou canſt never pray, and have a fearefull apprehenſion of evill in prayer*; thou canſt not. It is good to have a deepe apprehenſion of thy ſinnes: apprehend them to be as many hells as thou canſt, thou canſt never apprehend them deeply enough: but if thou haſt a fearefull apprehenſion of them, thou canſt never pray.

When the Apoſtle would exhort the *Philipians* to continue in one Spirit, and in one minde, fighting together through the faith of the Goſpell, he exhorts them *that in nothing they feare*, Phil. 1.27,28. For if a man be terrified with his adverſary, with the power of his adverſary, and feares he ſhall never be able to withſtand him but muſt fall before him through his ſubtilty, that he can never be wary enough for him: Alas, he can never ſtrive with hope and conrage againſt him. So, beloved, if we have a fearefull and diſcouraged kinde of apprehenſion of evill, we can never pray ſo as to prevaile.

Apprehend thy ſinnes to be as helliſh, and

and as damnable as thou canſt: Feele even the fire of hell in every one of them: but take heed of a *fearefull* apprehenſion of them, *ſo* to apprehend the evill of them, as to thinke with thy ſelfe that becauſe thou art guilty of *theſe and theſe* ſinnes, that thou ſhalt never get in with God again, God will never be reconciled to thee: *theſe* will eate out thine heart in prayer.

4 Fourthly, *we can never pray if we have any ſecret diſpaire* that there is any difficulty too hard for us to grapple withall, or to get through in our prayers. Howſoever a man prayes, yet if he have *any ſpice* of theſe feares in him, to thinke *now I have taken great deale of paines, but am never the better; I have prayed and prayed, but have got no good: I may goe on and doe thus and thus, but ſhall never prevaile or ſpeed; all my labours, all my prayers and indeavours will be loſt*; this takes away the very ſpirit and life of a mans prayers.

Judas after he had betrayed the Lord Jeſus, he was diſcouraged from ever praying for mercy. Why? becauſe he thought it was *impoſſible* for him to get it; *I have betrayed innocent blood*, ſaith he. *Matth.* 27. as if he ſhould ſay, *I ſhall never out-wraſtle this ſinne; this ſinne is my death: I have brought*

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the blood of the Sonne of God on me, I ſhall never claw off this ſinne: now *Judas* thus deſpayring, we never read one letter of any prayer that he made to God to get out of it; no, he thought it too hard for him to get mercy. Deſpaire drives a man from that he did hope for; becauſe now he thinkes there is an impoſſibility in getting of it.

Beloved, miſtake me not; there is a double deſperation.

Firſt, there is a deſperation of *infidelity*; 1
and that deads and drawes the ſoule from God.

Secondly, there is a deſperation of *extremity*; 2
And, if ever you meane to come to God, and to get any grace from God, you *muſt* come with deſperation of extremity. deſperation puts *life* into a mans prayers and indeavours.

As, a Souldier when he ſeeth nothing but to *kill or be killed*, that he ſees his ſtate deſperate; why, this will compell a very coward to fight; this will make a coward fight (*as if he would kill the Devill*, ſaith the Proverb) it will make him fight like a ſpirit; he will be afraid of nothing. Take a Souldier that fights deſperately for his life, with a *kill or be killed*; he feares nothing; neither Pike, nor Sword, nor Gun; why?

he

he fights for his life. Therefore one notes that sometimes it is the neareſt way to victory to be desperate in attempts and in fight. Therefore when *William the Conquerour* came first into *England*,, at *Hasting*, he sent back his Ships againe, that so the Souldiers might have no hope of saving themselves by flying back. And so at *Battle*, at *one* encounter, a *little* Army of the English slew a *great* Army of the French. Why? they grew desperate.

So, could men pray desperately, could they pray with a *pray or be damned*: beg with a *begge or be damned*; seeke to God for grace that you want with a *speed or be damned*; then would their prayers be more earneſt and powerfull to get grace. O, did men pray thus, they would pray otherwise then they doe.

Men pray, but they pray deadly, coldly, and lazily, as if they had no need of prayer, or as if they had no need of the grace they pray for; they pray for grace, but get it not; they pray for zeale, but have it not; for repentance and holineſſe, but obtaine it not.

Beloved, either get zeale and holineſſe, or elſe there is no mercy: either get grace and repentance, or elſe there is no mercy for

for thee. Pray then when thou prayest for grace, with *a ſpeede or be damned*: ſay unto thy ſoule, *either we muſt ſpeede and get grace* Soule, *or elſe we muſt goe to hell.* If men would pray thus, with *a ſpeede or be damned*, we ſhould never ſee, nor God ſhould never heare ſo many cold and dead praiers as now we pray.

Deſpaire makes a man a Munke ſaith the Papiſt: but *this deſpayre* makes a man a good Chriſtian I ſay: never doth a man pray indeede till he feels himſelfe in extremity, hopeles and deſperate in regard of himſelfe; ſo that he ſeeth no remedie at all but *get Chriſt: get grace or be damned for ever. Get power and ſtrength over theſe corruptions*: otherwiſe they *will deſtroy and damne thee*; this would make a man pray for life. Men pray coldly and faintly: why? becauſe though they ſee they have no grace, no zeale, no holines, no repentance, no evidence of Chriſt: yet they hope to be ſaved notwithſtanding. O beloved, the divell hath blinded theſe men to the intent they may be damned.

But, if men would pray deſperate praiers with a *pray or be damned, ſeeke with a finde or be damned*: men would then pray other praiers then they doe. Such praiers did *David*

vid pray *Psal.* 130. 1. *Out of the deepe places have I called unto thee O Lord, Lord heare my prayer:* as if he should say, Lord, I am even in the depth of miserie, plunged over head and eares, so that now I sinke and perish if thou helpe not: Lord, hear my praier. *This desperation* a Christian must have, this quickens up his Spirits, and puts life into him: but, take heede of the *desperation of Infidelity:* Saint *Austen* saith it is the murtherer of the soule: the spice of it will eate out the heart of a man, and kill the strength of all his endeavours.

I should now come to apply this doctrine; but I feare me there be many amongst us, that never come so farre towards heaven, as to know what these discouragements meane. This is lamentable.

It is true, *discouragements* are hideous cases in praier, and a man may perish and goe to hell that hath them: but yet, they are *some-what profitable signes* that a man doth at the least looke a little towards God, or else he could not know what they are. But there are abundance that never have attained so farre in religion, as to understand what they meane: but goe on in drinking, whoring, carding and dicing, hating and maliciing, fretting and chafing, mocking & coveting:

ting, swearing and blaspheming, in security, in hardnes of heart and impenitencie: they are more carefull for their doggs, for their potts, and for their tables, and for their shops, then they are of their soules: And which is enough to astonish any that is godly, these men scarce finde any discouragements in praier: O, they have a good courage to pray at all times: O, say they, God forbid that any man should be discouraged in praier: I thanke God I have a good hope in God; God hath given me a good heart of grace to call upon him, and I make no question but that God heares me: God would never bid us to pray if he did not meane to heare us.

Beloved, these men that are so bold in the goodnes of their hearts to call upon God, they never as yet praied in all their lives: all the praiers of the wicked are indeede no praiers.

Daniel confessing the sinnes of wicked *Judah*, saith, *though all this evill be come upon us, yet made we not our prayer to turne from our wicked wayes. Dan. 9. 13.* all the time of those seventy yeares, *Daniel* saith they never made praier to God; yet they fasted every yeare, and praied every day, twise every day at the least, which would amount

in that time to 50000 and 100 prayers: how then could *Daniel* ſay they never made *one* praier? I anſwer, (and pray marke it) *becauſe* they never did quite turne from their evill waies. Though thou makeſt never ſo many praiers, though thou boaſteſt of the goodneſſe of thy condition, and ſnatcheſt at the Promiſes of God: yet if thou turneſt not from thine iniquities, thou never as yet mad'ſt any praier by the Judgement of God himſelfe. *Paul* made many thouſand praiers before his converſion, he could not have beene a Phariſe elſe; but they were never accounted praiers to him: therefore as ſoon as ever he was converted, behold ſaith God *he prayeth Acts 9.*

A wicked man, a carnall Chriſtian, though he have the righteouſneſſe of Saint *Paul* before his converſion, of living blamleſſe, unreproveable in reſpect of the outward righteouſneſſe of the Law: yet he can never make an *acceptable prayer* till he be truely converted; his praiers are no better then howling of dogs, or lowing of Oxen, yea the Lord abhorrs them. O what *poore* incouragements canſt thou have, ſeeing the Lord never tallies downe any of thy prayers? wicked men are like *Ulyſſes*, who wept more for the death of his dogge, then of his

his wife; ſo wicked men weepe and mourne for the loſſe of their corne and their cattle, hawkes and houndes, cardes and dice: but never for the loſſe of their praiers. So long as thou continueſt in thy prophaneſſe and impenitency, thou loſeſt all thy praiers: there is not one of them that God tallies downe, or reckons for a praier. Here we might have a great deale of matter, if time would ſuffer me. But it will not, onely let me tell you, I ſpeake onely to thoſe whoſe hearts God hath awakened out of their ſinnes, but who are oft diſcouraged: take heede of theſe diſcouragements.

For, firſt, *they will drive thee to melancholy.* Beloved, there are a great many melancholy men in the world, and this is the cauſe of it; men are contented to be converted by halves: becauſe they are diſcouraged in the worke. If thou ſuffer thy ſelfe to be diſcouraged, it will eate up thy ſpirit and thou wilt be like a *ſilly dove without a heart*, *Prov.* 7.11. A dove is a melancholy creature, that hath no heart to any thing; ſo *Ephraim* hath no heart to call upon God, no heart to returne unto God: and this is the cauſe that men and women goe whineing and mourning under the burden of ſin, and are not able to come out, becauſe of 1

discouragements: all the policie of hell is lesse then this policy of the divell, in driving men to despair or discouragements: this doth more hurt then al the rest of hel besides

2 Secondly, if you doe not take heede of them, they will bring you to speake against God, *I have prayed, but the Lord will not heare me: I have called, and the Lord will not answer, but hath turned away his eares from me.* Now, thou speakest against God. *Num.* 21. 4, 5. The soule of the people was much discouraged, and the people spake against God, and against *Moses*, saying, Wherefore have you brought us out of *Egypt*, to die in the wildernesse? for here is neither bread, nor water, and our soule loatheth this light bread. So, beloved, *if we suffer our soules to be discouraged, we shall soone come to murmure against God*: wherefore hath he brought me up to this strictnes, and precisenesse? when I was a drunkard, a worldling, when I followed the lust of my flesh and liberty, then I enjoyed onnions, garlicke, and the flesh-pots of *Egypt*: pleasures and delights for my soule: then I had a good hope in God, and a good perswasion that my soul should goe to heaven: and then Preachers told me that if I would give over such and such sinnes, and looke after Hea-

Heaven a little more, and doe ſuch and ſuch things, O *then* I ſhould come to a Land flowing with milke and honey, then I ſhould not miſſe of glory and ſalvation; But alas, I ſee nothing but Gyants and Anakims; I am in a wilderneſſe; now, *now* I ſee a man may have a great deal of repentance, and yet be a caſt-away; A man may have a great deal of faith & yet be but a reprobate; A man may give over a great *many* ſins, and yet periſh in hell; now I ſee a man may live civilly and well, and have & do a great many good things, and yet be damned when he hath done all: A man may even goe to Heaven Gates, and yet the gates be ſhut againſt him, and he turned into hell. Alas! my poore ſoule is in a wilderneſſe; *now* I know not which way to goe; I am ready to loſe my ſelfe, I ſee nothing here *now* but huge Gyants, the ſonnes of *Anack*, *ſtrong corruptions*, inclining and forcing me to evill: moſt fearefull and violent ſuggeſtions and temptations of the Devill, ready to thruſt me into the gulfe of wickedneſſe and deſpaire.

And now, the ſoule begins to thinke that it is good for it to returne again into Egypt, to fall to its old courſes againe: for certainly God lookes for no ſuch matter, he re-

quires no ſuch ſtrictneſſe and preciſeneſſe: And ſo it falls a whining and repining at the Word and Miniſters of God that have call'd men to it, and laid it upon them: and hath no heart now to do thus and thus any longer. And *thus* it falls into diſcouragements becauſe of the way, and into a thouſand *quandaries* whether it may not goe back againe or no. And all theſe murmurings and repinings, are becauſe men ſuffer themſelves to be diſcouraged.

3 Thirdly, *diſcouragements will cauſe thee to thinke that God hates thee.* When the ſoule like *Baals* Prieſts, hath been crying from morning to noone; ten, twenty, thirty yeeres, it may be, and yet hath no anſwer: *now*, it will begin to thinke *if God did love me, then he would grant me my petitions.* Then hereupon comes into a mans ſecret thoughts and feares *that God hardly loves his ſoule.* So was it with *Iſrael*; when they were diſcouraged, they ſaid, *becauſe the Lord hated us, therefore he brought us out of the Land of Egypt*, Deut. 1. 27. Becauſe that they were diſcouraged, and becauſe that their Brethren that went for ſpies, had diſheartned them; therefore they were apt to ſay the Lord hated them.

Beloved, it is a miſerable thing when the

the ſoule calls the love of God into queſtion. Conſider that as thou canſt not have a friend if thou beeſt ſuſpitious and jealous of his love to thee: So, thou canſt never have the love of God ſettled on thy heart ſo long as thou art jealous of his love to thee.

Fourthly, *If thou root them not out, it is to be feared that they will bring thee to deſpaire.* Melancholy thoughts and feares, and diſcouragements, drive the ſoule to deſpaire. For when the ſoule ſees it ſelfe ſtill diſappointed of its hopes, at the laſt it grows hopeleſſe: If it have waited one day and the next day too: if it have praied this weeke, this month, this yeare, and yet ſtill it ſeeth it ſelfe held off and diſappointed: it will at laſt grow hopeleſſe. Take heed therefore, I beſeech you, of all needleſſe diſcouragements; to fear be auſe that thou findeſt not that that thou wiſhedſt or prayedſt for, to day or to morrow, in thine own time, that therefore thou ſhalt *never* get it, that now thou ſhouldeſt for ever deſpaire of the grace and love of God, and thinke that now God will never heare thee, that thou ſhalt never get grace and power over thy corruptions. 4

Men thinke that the preaching of the

Word of God brings men to despaire, the preaching of such *strict* points, and the urging such *precise* doctrines makes men despaire: men are loth to be at the paines to root out their discouragements: It is rather a cold or dead preaching of the Word that is the cause of this: for when the soule is *instructed by holinesse*, humbled by holinesse, converted by holinesse, at the last when it comes to be thorowly awakened, when it sees that *this* and *thus* is required in a true conversion of the soule to God, that *herein* true repentance must declare and demonstrate it selfe by *these* and *these* fruits, or else it is but false and rotten: Why now, the soul must needs be brought to despaire, because it seeth that though it have been thus and thus humbled, though it have praied, fasted and mourned in this and this manner: yet it sees it hath not a *sounduesse* of grace.

There is such a grace in it, such a worke and such a fruit of Gods Spirit in it, that yet he could never finde in himselfe: this makes the soule to despaire. Indeed Preachers may be too blame if they speake and preach *onely* the terrours and condemnations of the Law without the promises of the Gospel: for *these* should be so tempered that

that every poore broken ſoule may ſee mercy and redemption for him upon his ſound and unfeined repentance and humiliation. But if men doe deſpaire, they may thanke themſelves for it, their owne ſinnes for it, their owne diſcouragements for it, becauſe they ſuffer theſe to continue in them.

Cain his heart grew ſad, his countenance fell, he was wroth and diſquieted in his minde, and heavily diſcouraged; why? *Gen.*4. Sin lay at the dore, (what dore?) the dore of his conſcience rapping and beating upon his heart.

Beloved, when the ſoule lets ſinne lie at the dore: drunkeneſſe, pride and worldlineſſe, ſecurity, hardnes and deadnes of heart lie at the dore: when a man lets his negligent and fruitleſſe hearing of the word lie at the dore, when a man lets his vaine and dead praying, his temporizing and faſhionary ſerving of God lie at the dore of conſcience, to tell him that all his hearing of the word of God profits him nothing, that his praiers are dead and vaine, that his mourning, faſting, and all his humiliation is counterfeit and rotten, and that he hath no ſoundneſſe of grace in him, but that for all this he may fall into hell: *when ſinne lyeth thus at the dore*, thus rapping at the conſcience

science, it is no wonder if the soule fall into desperation.

Cain let his sinne lie at the dore, there it lay rapping and beating, and told him that his careleseneſſe and negligent sacrificing to God was not accepted: and therefore no marvell if *Cain* be so cast down in his countenance, and that he fall to despaire.

O beloved, when sinne lieth bouncing and beating at the dore of thy heart, when thy sinne (whatsoever it is, search thy heart and finde it out) lies knocking and rapping at the dore of thy conscience *day by day*, and month by month, and thou art content to let it lie, and art unwilling to use meanes to remove it, and art loth to take the paines to get the bloud of Christ to wash thy soule from it, or the Spirit of Christ to cleanse thee from it; then thy soule will despaire, either in this world, or in the world to come. But let us take heede then, that our conscience condemne us not in any thing or course that we allow in our selves: for if *that doe*, then much more will God who is greater then our consciences, and knowes all things.

The Apostle hath an excellent Phrase: *Rom. 8. 1. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus &c.* As if he should say

ſay, there is not *one* condemnation; there is none in *Heaven*, God doth not condemne them; there is none in *earth*, their owne heart and conſcience doth not condemne them; he that is in Chriſt Jeſus, that walks not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit, there is none, no *not one* condemnation to him; *none*, neither in Heaven nor in earth: no word, no commandement, no threatning condemnes him. But if thy conſcience condemne thee, and tell thee thou letteſt ſin lie at the dore, rapping at thy conſcience day after day, and month after month, telling thee that yet thou art *without Chriſt*, that yet thou never hadſt any true faith in the Lord Jeſus, that yet thou haſt not *truely* repented, and turned from thy ſinnes: this will at laſt drive thy ſoule into *heavie* diſcouragements, if not into *finall* deſpaire.

O beloved, religion and piety, and the power of godlineſſe, goe downe the winde every where. What is the reaſon of it, but becauſe of theſe diſcouragements that men live and go in? Men pray and pray, and their prayers profit them not: men run up and downe and come to the Church and heare the Word, and receive the Sacraments, and uſe the meanes of grace, but to no *end*: *they* are unprofitable to them: they

remaine

remaine in their ſinnes ſtill: the ordinances of God bring them not out of their luſts and corruptions: hereby they diſgrace and diſcredit the ordinances of God in the eyes and account of the men of the world, making them thinke as if there were no more power nor force in the Ordinances of God then theſe men manifeſt.

There is no life in many Chriſtians, mens ſpirits are diſcouraged; theſe ſecret diſcouragements in their hearts take away their ſpirits in the uſe of the meanes, that though they uſe the meanes, yet it drives them to deſpaire of reaping good or profit by them.

1 Beloved, I could here tell you enough to make your hearts ake to heare it.

Firſt, *all your complaints they are but winde*, Job 6. 26. doe you imagine to reprove words, and the ſpeeches of one that is deſperate which are as winde? *Jobs* friends taking *Job* to be a man of deſpaire, they accounted all his words but as winde.

Doeſt thou neſtle any diſcouragement in thy heart? thou maiſt complaine of ſinne as much as thou canſt: yet all thy complainings are but as winde: thou maiſt cry out againſt thy corruptions, with weeping and teares, and pray and fight againſt them:

and

and yet all thy weeping, mourning and praying is but as the winde: thou maiest beg grace, thou maist seeke after God, thou maist heare the Word, receive the Sacraments, and yet all will be to thee as wind: all will vanish, be unprofitable, not regarded.

Secondly, *discouragements drive us from the use of the meanes.* If ever we meane to come out of our sinnes, if ever we meane to get grace and faith, and assurance, and zeale: we *must constantly* use the meanes, 1 Sam. 27. 1. *David* saith, there is nothing better for me then that I should speedily escape into the Land of the Philistims, and *Saul* shall despaire of me to seeke me any more. *David* thought in himselfe, if I can make him out of hope of finding me, certainely he will give over seeking of me. So when the soule hath any secret despaire of finding the Lord, that soule will quickly be drawne from seeking of the Lord in the use of the meanes. 2

What ever you doe then, O be not discouraged, lest you be driven from the use of the meanes: if you be driven from the use of the *meanes*, woe is to you, you will never finde God then. Be not driven from praier, nor driven from holy conference, nor

nor driven from the Word, nor driven from the Sacrament, nor from meditation, nor from the diligent and strict examination of thy selfe, of thy heart and of all thy waies: for these are the waies of finding the Lord. If you nourish any thoughts and feares of despaire in you, if you be discouraged, you will be driven from the use of the meanes, which is a lamentable thing; therefore be not discouraged.

3 Thirdly, discouragements will make you stand poaring on your former courses, *thus I should have done, and that I should have done, woe is me that I did it not*: it will make a man stand poaring on his sinnes, but never able to get out of them. So it was like to be with them in the Ship with *Paul*, *Acts* 27.20. In the tempest at Sea, they were utterly discouraged from any hope of safety: now indeed *Paul* told them what they should have done if they had been wise: Sirs, *you should have hearkned to me, and not have loosed*, ver. 21. as if he had said, you should have done thus and thus: but *now* doe not stand poaring too much on that, you should have hearkned to me, and not have launched forth, &c. but that cannot be holpen, *now*: therefore I exhort you to be of good cheare, &c.

So

So beloved, when the ſoule is diſcouraged upon theſe thoughts, *I ſhould have prayed better, I ſhould have heard the Word of God better, and with more profit; I ſhould have repented better, I ſhould have performed this and that religious and good dutie better; but ah wretch that I am, I have ſinned thus and thus;* it is alwaies looking on this ſinne and that ſinne, this imperfection and that failing: when now I ſay the ſoule is diſcouraged, it will be alwaies poaring upon ſinne, but it will never come out of its ſinne; alwaies poaring upon its deadneſſe, and unprofitableneſſe, but never able to come out of it. O beloved, be of good cheare, and be not diſcouraged; it is true you ſhould have prayed better; you ſhould have heard the Word of God better heretofore, you ſhould have been more carefull and circumſpect of your wayes then you were; but now you cannot helpe it; theſe things and times are gone and cannot be recalled: ſuch a one hath been a drunkard, a ſwearer, a worldling, &c. but he cannot helpe it now. True, he might have helped it, and becauſe he did not, his heart ſhall bleed for it, if he belong to God: but doe not ſtand poaring too much upon it, but conſider *now* what you have to doe, *now* you are to humble your

selfe, now you are to strive with God in all manner of prayer for more grace, and more power of obedience and assurance, and be not discouraged.

4 Fourthly, *if the soule be discouraged, it will breed nothing but sorrow.* What is the reason that many Christians are alwaies weeping, and mourning, and sighing, and sobbing, from day to day, all their life time, and will not be comforted? because of these discouragements, 1 Thes. 4. 13. *Sorrow not* (saith the Apostle) *as those that have no hope*, as if he had said, sorrow if you will; but do not sorrow as they that have no hope.

How is that? it is a sorrow with nothing but sorrow, from which they have no hope of inlargement or freedome.

O then my brethren, suppose you have dead hearts, suppose you want zeale, you want assurance; suppose it be so, yet labour to attaine these graces; sorrow and spare not; weepe and mourne, and powre out whole buckets of teares for your sinnes, if you can: but, *sorrow not with nothing but sorrow*: be not discouraged: suppose that thou hast a dead heart, that thou art an hypocrite, that thou hast a rotten heart; it is a heavie thing, and a fearefull case indeed,

for

for which thou haſt great cauſe of humiliation and ſorrow; but yet *ſorrow not deſperately* as men without hope: be not wholly diſcouraged, but as you ſorrow for your ſins, ſo alſo labour with incouragement to get out and be rid of your ſins.

Fifthly, *diſcouragements breed and procure a totall perplexity.* They leave the ſoule in a maze, that it knowes not whether to turne it ſelfe. When men come to be diſcouraged, *Oh what ſhall I doe* ſaith one, *I am utterly undone* ſaith another: *I know not what will become of me*, ſaith a third: *Oh I am utterly loſt, I ſhall periſh one day, one day God will diſcover me, and be avenged on me for this and that ſin: I were as good go to hell at the firſt as at the laſt, for that will be the end of me: I have gon to prayer, but that doth not helpe me: I have gone to Sacraments, but I finde no helpe: ſtill my ſoule lies under the power of ſinne, ſtill my ſinnes are as ſtrong in me as ever*: Thus the ſoule is diſcouraged and cryes out, *Oh, what ſhall I doe? I know not what to doe. What ſhall I doe* ſayeſt thou?

Alas, thou haſt things enough to doe, if thou wert not diſcouraged. *Utterly undone!* No, man, thou mighteſt ſee that thou art not utterly undone, but that thou art diſcouraged. Doſt thou not know what will be-

come of thee? yea, poore soule, there is mercy, grace and peace *for thee*, if thou wilt not be discouraged.

6 Sixthly, *discouragements whisper within a man a sentence of death, and an impossibility of escaping.* As far as the discouragement of life goeth, so farre goeth the sentence of death. *We despaired of life, and had the sentence of death in our selves*, saith the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 1.8.9. he despaired of life in himself, and therefore had the sentence of death in himselfe; this was good, but he did not despaire of life in God; for *then* he should have had likewise the sentence of death from God in his conscience.

If you despaire in the Lord, you have the sentence of death and damnation from God in your conscience; take heed of this my beloved; be not discouraged in God: do not despaire in the Lord: *that* will worke a *miser-ble* effect in your soules: it will secretly whisper a sentence of damnation in your soules.

It is strange to consider how many poore soules rub on with these whispering sentences in their bosomes, suffering their consciences day by day to tell them that they are rotten, to tell them that they were never yet converted, to tell them that they are yet in the

the ſtate of damnation, and yet they will not root out theſe diſcouragements.

O goe to the *Throne of grace*, beg for grace and for mercy, and for power againſt ſinne, and be not diſcouraged. What? wilt thou carry thy owne ſentence of death in thy breſt? if thou wilt not rouze up thy ſoule, and pray with more affection and confidence, and ſhake off diſcouragements, take heed leſt thou carry the ſentence of thy own death and damnation in thy bowels. O therefore *once more* let me beſeech you to take heed of theſe diſcouragements, and now hearken to the voice of God which calleth upon you, *feare not. Thou dreweſt nigh in the day that I called upon thee, thou ſaidſt feare not.*

FINIS.